

Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission
Commission Meeting
May 24, 2006
Room 470, Governor Office Building, Jefferson City
Meeting Minutes

Members Attending: Dalton Wright, Rep. David Pearce, Kent Thomas, Craig Borchelt, Bob Welling, Rep. Terry Witte, Sen. Frank Barnitz, Sharon Gulick

Others attending: Gen. Sidwell and Alan Stark, Missouri National Guard; Pat Rowe Kerr, MO Veterans Commission; Mary Bruton, DED MERIC; Chris Heard, St. Robert; Alan Richter, SBDC, St. Louis; Dr. Judene Blackburn, Waynesville; Melissa Randall, Missouri School Boards Association; Mike Nichols, DED; Paul Fennewald, Missouri Homeland Security

Media: Chris Blank, Associated Press

Chair Wright opened the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

Minutes from January 19, 2006 meeting were approved as amended. There was a correction on page 5, Other Business, \$200,000 million instead of \$2 million made by Craig Borchelt

Minutes from the Education Task Force Feb 2nd and March 2nd 2006 meetings were accepted.

Bob Welling offered a resolution thanking Kent Thomas for his chairmanship of the Military Dependent's Education Task Force. Motion approved.

Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission by Commission action created and appointed a Task Force to study and make recommendations with reference to issues relating to education of military dependents; and

WHEREAS, Kent D. Thomas, a member of the Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission, was appointed by the Chairman of this Commission as Presiding Officer of such Task Force; and

WHEREAS, Kent D. Thomas convened meetings of said Task Force members and skillfully conducted meetings producing a dialogue of great worth to the Commission and by his masterful efforts opened vistas to guide this Commission in the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commission, as a whole, does hereby express appreciation and does commend Kent D. Thomas for his efforts and does direct that this resolution be enrolled in the minutes of this meeting.

Report from Military Dependent's Education Task Force – Kent Thomas

Mr. Thomas reported on the work of the task force. He thanked the members of the task force for their dedication and hard work. He also cited the members of the task force for their willingness to cooperate and develop recommendations that were acceptable to all members. The following is a list of the task force findings and recommendations.

- The task force feels it is imperative that their recommendations be shared with the Department of Defense (DOD) to impact the DOD ranking of Missouri as military-friendly. Many of the issues identified by the task force can be addressed by the local school district or resolved by better counseling of students and parents on the timing of taking of required certain courses (e.g., Missouri Constitution should be taken in the Junior or Senior year). However, the task force felt that we will need to consider a rule change to allow some variance in taking these required courses.
- Transfer of school records does not appear to be an issue in Missouri.
- Redundant entrance/exit testing does not appear to be an issue for Missouri students.
- Kindergarten entrance age issue was addressed in legislation this year; unfortunately the legislation did not pass. It will be considered again next year.
- Eligibility to play sports does not appear to be an issue in Missouri. The task force chose to not address the issue of students being permitted to play a sport that is not offered in their school district in a neighboring school district. This issue is shared by all students in Missouri.
- Gifted Programs: Transfer students must qualify for the gifted program by meeting the requirements in the school district and these policies are applied to all transfer students equally. Frequently, these programs have a maximum number of students that can participate and sometimes this limit has been met.
- Foreign languages – There was concern from some parents that Missouri did not allow foreign language to be counted as a fine arts credit. The task force was unable to find any state that accepted foreign language as a fine art credit. Beginning with next school year students will be required to complete 2 foreign language credits for graduation.
- Finger prints – There was concern with the time required to process finger prints for background checks and this would then extend the time frame required for a spouse to be accepted as a teacher. The task force has found three options for getting the fingerprints expedited.
- Voting in local elections – It was agreed that this would be a very difficult issue to pass.
- Credit for junior high courses for high school credit – Dr. Blackburn reported that Waynesville school board has just voted to allow Algebra I taken in the 8th grade to be accepted as completed by the High School and the student could then move onto Algebra II. This Algebra I course would not count as credit for High School graduation.

- Bright Flight Scholarship requires a student to be in the school district for at least two years prior to graduation in order to qualify for the scholarship. While not part of the report, the Commission felt that this issue should be added.
- Task Force recommends that a brochure or similar document be created that addresses the frequently asked questions from parents on Missouri's education requirements.
- Task Force further recommends that information on Missouri's rules be communicated to DOD and that variance between the school districts be noted.

Gen. Sidwell suggested that we investigate and communicate the availability of correspondence courses that would enable students to receive their required Missouri history credit. He also said that Missouri National Guard facilities might be available for the students to take such courses.

Mr Welling discussed the issue of voting in local school board elections. He felt that the ability to vote should be tied to the federal impact aid that the local school districts receive. The opposition to allowing military personnel to vote in local elections is generally thought to be because most military personnel do not pay local property taxes. However, the funds received from the federal impact aid to the local school district are actually in lieu of property taxes not being paid by military persons. Mr. Welling drafted possible language for consideration that would allow voting and also sets the qualifications for those voting. This would apply only to school districts that receive at least 35% of their funds from military impact aid.

ABSENTEE VOTING AT SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS BY MILITARY PERSONS STATIONED AT CERTAIN MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN MISSOURI.

“A military person assigned to a military installation located within a Missouri school district which receives at least thirty-five percent (35%) of that district's annual revenue as Federal Impact Aid, but which person is not registered to vote in Missouri, may vote by absentee ballot at the local school board election upon submitting an affidavit to the County Clerk that the military person has not simultaneously voted in a school board election in the place where the military person is a registered voter. The absentee ballot of the military person shall be cast at the County Clerk's Office in the County where the military installation is located. The term “military person” shall mean a member of the Armed Forces of the United States while in active service and shall also include the spouse of that military person.”

Another related matter called to the attention of the Commission was the existing Missouri law which makes it difficult for military persons to serve on local school boards and Mr. Welling offered for consideration a draft of some possible language to address that issue and that draft language is as follows:

QUALIFICATIONS FOR SERVICE AS LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS BY MILITARY PERSONS STATIONED AT CERTAIN MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN MISSOURI.

“A military person, at least 24 years of age, who is assigned to a military installation located within a Missouri school district which receives at least thirty five percent (35%) of that district’s annual revenue as Federal Impact Aid shall be qualified to serve as a local school board member even though that military person has not resided in Missouri for one whole year next preceding a school board election. The term “military person” shall mean a member of the Armed Forces of the United States while in active service and shall also include the spouse of that military person at least 24 years of age.”

House Research is also looking at possible legislative language to address these issues. It was agreed that these two issues are important to DOD’s ranking of Missouri as a military friendly state. Prior to 2002, there was the ability to sign an affidavit stating that if the individual was not voting in an election in another state/district they could then be allowed to vote in the local election.

Mr. Thomas further reported that the members of the task force had agreed to meet once or twice a year to address future issues. He recommended that the Commission continue the work of the task force. Discussion ensued on keeping the task force and what their assigned task would be.

Mr. Welling moved and Mr. Borchelt seconded the motion to keep the task force and that the task force would issue an annual report to the full Commission. Mr. Thomas would continue as task force chair. Motion approved. Future meetings will be moved around the state to allow local input.

Mr. Borchelt reported that he had talked with several people who do have a problem enrolling their children due to inability to get the transfer records sent directly to the school district and that the school district would not accept hand-carried records. Dr. Blackburn reported that Missouri law states records must be sent from the former school district and that hand-carried records can not be accepted. Gen. Sidwell asked why the student couldn’t be provisionally registered pending receipt of the records. Ms. Randol said that provisional registration can be done prior to the start of the school year; however, if the school year has already started a provisional registration can’t be done due to the requirement that the student’s immunization record be on file. It was agreed that this was an issue beyond just military families as it impacts any transfer student.

Gen. Sidwell suggested that a brochure/fact sheet be developed to address these issues. The Education Task Force was tasked with developing this document. The information will be available in a print document and be posted on the Commission’s website.

Mr. Thomas moved, Welling seconded motion to accept the report from the Task Force. Motion Approved.

Gen. Sidwell asked how the report from the Task Force could be sent to the DOD. Mr. Wright said that he would talk with the Secretary of the Army to see how that could be accomplished. He said that it wasn’t clear how the report could be shared with the Secretary of Defense, DOD or other branches of the military. A copy of the

report will also be sent to the Missouri Veteran's Commission to be shared with Missouri veteran organizations.

Dr. Blackburn said that Jean Silvernail, Public Schools Serving Military Dependents, said that she would accept the report and look at Missouri's ranking. Gen. Sidwell suggested a video conference with Ms. Silvernail to talk about the issues and what are the future steps that Missouri should take.

Report on visit with DOD – Dr. Judene Blackburn

Dr. Blackburn along with Knob Noster Superintendent Margaret Anderson met with Jean Silvernail, Public School Serving Military Dependents, in Washington in March and stated that DOD is very interested in the work of the Education Task Force. DOD is training individuals across the country to work with local school districts and parents to deal with transitioning students. The impact of re-basing from BRAC05 does not appear to have an effect on the Federal Impact Aid received by our school districts.

Rep. Pearce stated that he felt that issues related to access to education would be critical for Missouri in future BRACs.

Gen. Sidwell asked if the requirements and milestones are published so we can see what specifically needs to be accomplished. Mr. Thomas has a copy and will make them available to members.

Report on Legislation – Rep. David Pearce, Rep. Terry Witte, Sen. Frank Barnitz

Fourteen bills related to the military were passed this session – such as protests at military funerals, military leave for Kansas City police, appointment of Asst. Adjutant General; tax contributions to Military Family Relief Fund; Vietnam Veterans; all state offices and buildings to fly the prisoner of war flag; homeless veterans allowed to use the address of certain nonprofit organizations to receive military aid; Guard at Home program to assist families of deployed guard members. These are SB 578, SB 701, SB 830, SB 845, SB 964, SB 1060, HB 978, HB 983, HB 984, HB 1026, HB 1138, HB 1382, HB 1552, and HB 1787.

Consensus was that this was a good session and the members recognize that it may take a couple of sessions to accomplish all of our goals.

It was recommended that the list of passed legislation be included in the letter to DOD.

Rep. Pearce reported on HB 1398 that dealt with several of the issues of importance to the Commission. While the bill had strong approval, it was not passed on the final day of the session. The legislation will be submitted again next session.

Report on April 18th presentation to Missouri Development Finance Board (MDFB) – Dalton Wright, Rep. David Pearce, Sharon Gulick

Mr. Wright reported that he, along with Rep. Pearce and Sharon Gulick, met with the MDFB board to discuss the impact of BRAC05 on Missouri as well as the work of the Commission.

The consensus from the meeting was that we need to have a presence in Washington D.C. and the Commission should continue its work.

Rep. Pearce further reported that MDFB liked the work of the Commission because of its impact on rural Missouri. Lt. Governor Kinder, chair of MDFB, expressed a desire to continue the relationship between MDFB and MMPEC.

Rep. Pearce recommended that there be an ongoing annual commitment to the MMPEC for continuation of its work. This financial commitment would come from local communities, the State of Missouri and MDFB.

Mr. Wright recommended that a working group be formed to determine what the level of funding would be and from where it would come from. The working group would consist of members of the Commission, local communities, Missouri Association of Veteran's Organizations (MAVO), MDFB and DED. It was the consensus of the Commission that Mr. Wright and Rep. Pearce would work to form this working group to further evaluate the proposal, set a timeline, budget and other issues. It was further agreed that MMPEC would take the lead on the selection and oversight of any consultant that might be hired.

The development of a united front and a common message will clearly impact Missouri in the next BRAC. It was apparent that other states that had a common message and did their homework had limited impact compared to states that didn't.

Report on Hawthorn Homeland Security & Defense Industry Business Council –
Sharon Gulick and Craig Borchelt

Ms. Gulick reported that the council will hold its first meeting later this summer. The challenge right now is to identify Missouri companies that do defense contracting.

Members had several suggestions on organizations to contact to acquire names of businesses that are doing defense contracting. They will share this information with Mike Nichols (michael.nichols@ded.mo.gov)

Report on Department of Defense “Responding to Change” Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, May 2-5, 2006 – *Mary Bruton, DED, MERIC and Chris Heard, St. Robert*

Mr. Heard reported that he followed the growth track during the conference. One of the sessions highlighted the challenges that come from growth – e.g., growth could actually lead to problems that could result in losses at the base, such as problems with encroachment. One of the examples used was Scott Air Force Base in Illinois and the challenges of getting the workforce to the base as many of them live in Missouri. Mike Davis, OEA said that the communities around Fort Leonard Wood (FLW) would probably be eligible for aid. He will be visiting FLW in June and the

communities will have the opportunity to meet with him. The communities around the Fort will be working on an economic development plan for the region.

Defense Adjustment aid is available to communities whose economy is 1% or more reliant on defense related activities. Mr. Heard will get clarification on what is considered defense related.

Ms. Bruton also attended the conference and is also working with the Missouri Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development concerning the \$1 million national emergency grant. She reported on the activities of the St. Louis and Kansas City BRAC task forces. She attended the workforce assistance workshops and provided copies of PowerPoint from each of the sessions to the members.

Discussion ensued about some of the problems and challenges that are occurring in Kansas City and St. Louis with the process of closing and moving the commands. It appears that the national leaders are indicating that certain things are occurring while at the local level there is a lack of information and implementation of assistance.

Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) services to military personnel seeking business education and training – *Alan Richter, Regional Director, St. Louis SBDC*

Mr. Richter provided the members with information on the programs and services available to military personnel seeking business education and training.

One of the priorities for the SBDCs across the country is assisting individuals impacted by military service, deployment as well as veterans. He asked that the members share information on the SBDC with individuals in their communities.

Rep. Pearce suggested that the SBDCs work with the Family Support Centers at FLW and WAFB to get the word out about their services. Mr. Wright also suggested that they get involved in the programs for retiring military personnel that are held at the bases.

Missouri Homeland Security Office – *Paul Fennewald, Homeland Security Coordinator*

Mr. Fennewald highlighted the programs and activities within the Homeland Security Office and some opportunities for collaboration. His office is also interested in developing relationships with the business community to address both business preparedness, as well as identifying assistance and contributions that the businesses might contribute during an emergency.

Mr. Wright asked about the Federal Homeland Security Funds that come to Missouri. He asked if Missouri Homeland Security has a handle on these funds and how much has been spent. Mr. Fennewald stated that they look monthly at this and pull back any funds that are not being spent to use elsewhere in Missouri.

Foreclosures and active duty personnel – *Pat Rowe Kerr, Missouri Veteran's Commission*

Ms. Kerr reported that she had contacted five national associations that assist military service members who have financial problems resulting from their deployment. Most of these funds are used to help with rent and mortgage expenses, which is sometimes the last step before foreclosure. She provided information to the members on organizations that provide financial counseling and assistance to help military service members avoid foreclosure.

She reported that there are now a lot of programs that provide this assistance.

Other Business and New Business

Mr. Welling invited the members to attend the open house at WAFB June 17 & 18.

Ms. Gulick informed Commission members that she would be retiring at the end of May and has accepted a position with the University of Missouri Extension. Mike Nichols with DED will be replacing Sharon as DED's ex-officio member of the Commission and would also be the Commission's Executive Director.

Discussion on the website ensued. It was suggested that MMPEC's website needs to be enhanced to include information and links to other organizations that assist veterans.

Mr. Wright and the members congratulated Rep. Pearce on his receipt of the 2006 Kirkpatrick Excellence in Governance Award at CMSU.

Next Meeting

Next regular meeting will be held September 6th with a location to be determined later. Topics for discussion during that meeting will include the website, other organizations to link with, and the education task force report. The next meeting after that will be held October 18th.

Adjourn

Mr. Thomas moved and Mr. Borchelt 2nd the motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes Approved:



6 September 2006

Dalton Wright, Chair

Date